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Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2017



TODAY'S EDITORIAL

Paul Ryan's moral high ground finds its low point

CBC Editorial: Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2017; Editorial # 8244

The following is the opinion of Capitol Broadcasting Company

If U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan ever held a moral high ground in the political landscape of our nation's capital, he's given it up. For evidence, look no further than his own words during an interview last week with NPR's Morning Edition anchor Steve Inskeep.

In a broad-ranging discussion, the topic turned to the widening accusations of sexual harassment across the nation. In pointing out that Ryan has said that public officials "should be held to a very high standard," Inskeep noted that Ryan has called on Alabama Republican Roy Moore to drop out of the Senate race because of "credible" allegations of inappropriate behavior with teenage girls and young women.

As Inskeep pressed Ryan, he sought to contrast Moore's situation with that of the admitted behavior of President Donald Trump. "I haven't spent my time reviewing the difference in these two cases," Ryan said, clearly seeking to avoid the topic.

Inskeep pressed on and Ryan admitted to having some "difference of opinions" with the president. But Ryan continued and what he had to say should give pause to those who truly expect public officials to act with integrity and meet a "higher standard."

"What I see is a president who is fighting for the things that I'm fighting for. I see a president who's fighting for an agenda that will make a positive difference in people's lives. Is this president unconventional? No two ways about it. He's very unconventional. But if we make good by the American people by actually improving their lives and fixing problems and finding solutions that are bothering them, that's a good thing. That's what we're working toward."

There you have it. Ryan admits to selling out and admits that the ends justify most any means – even if that includes sexual harassment and lewd, boorish behavior by the president of the country. If Ryan didn't feel Trump was a conduit for policies he favored, would he be more critical of the president's behavior?

Ryan clearly chooses to use a double standard as well – based purely on politics. If John Conyers were a Republican instead of a Democrat, Ryan seems to suggest he ought to get a pass (instead, Ryan's calling for his resignation) amid increasing allegations of sexually inappropriate behavior.

President Trump, who brags of forceful and inappropriate advances on women, is under a cloud of questionable campaign practices and pushing the agenda of hate-mongers, doesn't get held to that "higher standard." He and Ryan are ideological soulmates, regardless of the abhorrent behavior.

Saying that "My job here as Speaker of the House is to help make sure that Congress is an institution that we're proud" doesn't cut it. Part of Ryan's job as a leader of one of the three co-equal branches of government is to hold the executive branch accountable. That's what our nation's founders intended.

If Ryan is truly going to be a leader in Congress and the nation – just two heartbeats from the presidency – he can't compartmentalize good and bad behavior by those who agree with his legislative agenda.

Ryan may have been looking to avoid the issue during his NPR interview, but instead provided a disappointing and all-too-revealing confession. Like many of his fellow leaders in Congress, Ryan proves no standard is too low among those with whom you agree -- and it can't be high enough for those outside your ideological circle.



TUESDAY, DEC. 5, 2017 -- A roundup of opinion, commentary and analysis on a lesson to be learned from the Alabama Senate race, a rural county living without a key health clinic, a case of GenX in an odd place and more.

POLITICS & POLICY

D.G. MARTIN: Learning from Alabama (*Winston-Salem Journal column*) -- What could we North Carolinians learn about ourselves when we sort out the results of the Dec. 12 Alabama special U.S. Senate election?

SEAN SULLIVAN, MICHAEL SCHERER & DAVID WEIGEL: RNC resumes support for Moore after Trump's endorsement (*Washington Post analysis*) -- President Trump's backing of the Republican Senate nominee prompted the Republican National Committee and a pro-Trump super PAC to re-enter Alabama a week before voters to the polls, boosting a candidate who had been largely cut off by his party.

GAVIN OFF & AMEX ALEXANDER: 'Mass chaos' reigned during fatal NC prison attacks, says one of the accused killers (*Charlotte Observer analysis*) -- An inmate at the center of October's deadly escape attempt at Pasquotank Correctional Institution said the prison sewing plant where the plan unfolded was always staffed with just one officer. A single correctional officer was overseeing 33 inmates when four of them tried to break out of the Eastern North Carolina prison. The inmates were armed with scissors and hammers, according to a 911 caller.

Court meddling demands scrutiny (*Greensboro News & Record*) -- There could be one N.C. Supreme Court seat on the 2018 ballot. Or seven. Or none.

CLAIRE GALOFARO: Protest in N.C. Trump Country brings home nation's

along the football field behind South Robeson High School in tiny Rowland. Their classmates marched the American flag onto the field. "The Star-Spangled Banner" began, and six teenage girls with blue bows in their hair each dropped to one knee. They had for days been quietly planning this protest, against discrimination and police brutality but also against the nation's ratcheting racial tensions, against those white supremacists they'd seen on television with torches in a city not so far away. They had agreed in the moments before that they were ready to accept the consequences, and braced for the response.

CLAIRE GALOFARO: In a place that backed Trump, residents weigh racial divides (AP News analysis) -- Here are some of the voices from a pro-Trump place in North Carolina whose population is split among African-Americans, Native Americans and whites.

Duke strips Charlie Rose of journalism award (WRAL-TV analysis) -- Duke is rescinding a journalism award given to newsman Charlie Rose after several women accused him of sexual misconduct. The DeWitt Wallace Center for Media & Democracy at Duke presented Rose with the Futrell Award in 2000. Bill Adair, director of the DeWitt Wallace Center, said the "overwhelming consensus" of Duke students, faculty and staff supported taking the award from Rose because he "used his status to prey on women who worked for him."

Vi Lyles, making history as new Charlotte mayor, aims to be an 'instrument of change' (Charlotte Observer analysis) -- Vi Lyles was sworn in Monday as Charlotte's first African-American female mayor and said she is "anxious to serve as your instrument of change."

LAURIE GOODSTEIN: Ministers Look to Revive King's 1968 Poverty Campaign (New York Times analysis) -- When 12 religious leaders in collars and vestments were arrested last week in the atrium of the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, they were reading Bible verses about caring for the poor, and doing it so loudly that their voices could be heard at the doors of senators' office suites nine stories above. Fifty years after the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. began his Poor People's Campaign, the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, a black minister and civil rights leader from North Carolina, and the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, a white theologian originally from Milwaukee, announced a revival of Dr. King's campaign. Organizers hope to mount large protests on 40 consecutive days next year, in at least 25 state capitals, with crowds in the tens of thousands courting arrest.

I-95 takes the 'super' out of superhighway (Fayetteville Observer) -- Whether it's for business or pleasure, Interstate 95 is a big part of travel plans for many of us in this region. The most heavily driven North-South route on the East Coast and one of the most heavily traveled highways in the United States, I-95 has earned its nickname: America's Main Street. Whether we're taking a short hop up to Dunn or down to Lumberton, or a longer trek up to Washington or down to Florida, I-95 is generally part of our route.

JAY PRICE: NC Ag Dept. seeks \$13M For Military Buffers (WUNC-FM analysis) -- The state Agriculture Department plans to ask the legislature for \$13 million to help buffer military bases from encroaching development. The

landowners not to develop their property in ways that could harm bases or training.

KEN ENGELHART: Why Concerns About Net Neutrality Are

Overblown (*New York Times column*) -- Service providers have blocked sites that competed with their own services. In 2004, the Madison River Telephone Company in North Carolina blocked Vonage to protect its own phone service from competition; it was fined by the F.C.C. for violating network neutrality rules. In 2012, AT&T let only some of its customers use the phone app FaceTime; after there were complaints to the F.C.C., it allowed all customers to use it. These incidents are troubling. But keep two things in mind.

BROOKS RAIFORD: What do NC citizens think of tech? Most have

positive view (*WRAL-TV/TechWire column*) - In November, a scientific poll was conducted of North Carolinians in which they were asked about their impression of the tech industry. The results were encouraging, with a few intriguing twists.

HEALTH

LEONEDA INGE: What Happens After a Rural NC Health Clinic

Closes? (*WUNC-FM analysis*) - -The former Warren Community Health Clinic in Warrenton sits empty and quiet, across the parking lot from the county health department. Until last year, the clinic served low-income patients who often were unable to pay for medical services and didn't have Medicare or Medicaid.

A shameful severance (*Winston-Salem Journal*) -- Almost \$4 million, the amount going in severance packages to four executives of Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Solutions, could go a long way toward helping our state's behavioral health-care system. The waste underscores why the state Department of Health and Human Services had to take over Cardinal — and puts the pressure on the state to reform it rapidly.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

ADAM WAGNER: How did GenX end up in a jar of honey? DEQ is

investigating. (*Wilmington Star-News analysis*) -- The revelation was among the highlights of the meeting of the N.C. Secretaries' Science Advisory Board.

CATHERINE KOZAK: Rising Sea Levels Complicate Flooding

Issues (*Coastal Review analysis*) -- The Outer Banks towns of Manteo and Nags Head have long been working to address stormwater problems, but rising seas and increased rainfall have made their efforts increasingly more challenging and expensive.

LAUREN K. OHNESORGE: Atlantic Coast Pipeline files first eminent

domain action in N.C. (*Triangle Business Journal analysis*) -- Utilities behind the Atlantic Coast Pipeline have filed condemnation complaints in North Carolina, the first eminent domain cases in the state over the 600-mile natural gas pipeline.

EDUCATION

Bob Spearman, lawyer who fought for education rights in NC dies at

74 (*Legacy.Com obit*) -- Bob Spearman, an honored trial lawyer who led the

sound basic education for all public school students, died on December 3, 2017. The causes were dementia and Parkinson's disease. A celebration of Bob's life will be held at a later date. His family suggests that memorial contributions be made to The Carolina Covenant Scholarships General Fund. Office of Scholarships and Student Aid, UNC-Chapel Hill, P.O. Box 1080, Chapel Hill, NC 27514-1080.

AND MORE

JEFF HAMPTON: "Candy Bomber" to visit Dare County possibly for the last time (*Norfolk Virginian-Pilot column*) -- Gail Halvorsen, 97, will speak to school children Dec. 15 and on Dec. 17 drop candy from the air, as he did for German children as a pilot after World War II.

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